

point. *Suffumata* is also usually larger with a forewing length of approximately 15 mm. compared with 12mm. in *otregiata*.

*E. silaceata* has a heavily indented median band, often divided into roughly equal halves. There is also a series of dark lunules along the postmedian line, some of which are conspicuous on the underside of the forewing. They are not present in the other three species.

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## Notes and Observations

CHRYSOLINA ORICALCIA MÜLL. (COL.: CHRYSOMELIDAE)  
IN S. E. LONDON. — The whole of this most attractive genus has long been very scarce or virtually absent in the immediate environs of London, on the south-east side at all events; though, as witness the localities given by Fowler (1890, *Col. Brit. Isl.* 4: 303-8), it was not always so. Up to now I have never been able to find even such allegedly common and generally distributed species as *C. polita* L. or *C. staphylea* L. in my home district. Great was my surprise and satisfaction therefore upon at last turning up the local and mostly uncommon *C. oricalcia* Müll. at the edge of the Shooters Hill Woods, a mere mile from here, by sweeping hedge-parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) on 29th June. The beetle appeared to be restricted to an area of some 6 or 7 square yards at a rough estimate, in half-shade, four being taken that evening, two on the next, and one more on 6th July. The same plant (with other umbellifers) was diligently swept for a much longer distance along the Eltham Common edge of the woods — on parts of which it grows profusely — without encountering any further specimens.

What makes the occurrence even more unexpected is the fact that I had worked the locality, including the area concerned, on frequent occasions over the years — especially the last one, 1986; admittedly without any special attention to the hedge-parsley (an unproductive plant hereabouts) yet certainly not ignoring it. The question therefore poses itself: has *C. oricalcia* moved into the area only very lately? But in fact the species of *Chrysolina* tend to be sedentary insects little given to migration. Thus it seems more likely that *oricalcia* has long existed there, but mostly at a density so low that it has been missed; while some factor may have caused an increase this season, 1987 — even though the summer in these parts has not been notable for high temperatures before the very end of June. There are old records from as near here as Plumstead and Abbey Wood, and the beetle is known to occur at the present time, I believe very locally, in N. E. Surrey.

The Shooters Hill beetles were placed in a perspex sandwich-box and supplied with foliage of goutweed or ground-elder (*Aegopodium podagraria*) from the garden. This they took to quite readily, feeding mainly at night and not or barely showing themselves in

either natural or artificial light. They seemed to spend much time skulking between the layers of absorbent paper lining the box. Probably therefore, like certain other *Chrysolina* species, *oricalcia* is largely vespertine or crepuscular in its habits, if not nocturnal, and earlier in the day might have to be sought at the base of the plants. It is recorded from several species of Umbelliferae; the only specimen I ever met with in earlier years was swept in the Thames marshes near Higham, near plants of spotted hemlock (*Conium maculatum*). In July 1962 my friend Dudley Collins found one under cut herbage, mostly *Anthriscus*, at Carshalton Beeches near Croydon. The inclusion of *Populus nigra* among its host-plants by Mohr (1966) seems questionable and probably relates to casual occurrence.

Whether because of the change of foodplant, or for some other reason, my beetles failed to breed — at least, no pairings or eggs were observed after a week. It is hardly likely that both sexes were not present among the seven individuals, though *oricalcia* does appear to be one of our Chrysolinae where the sexes are not readily distinguishable at sight.

This species must not be confused on account of its name with the non-British *C. aurichalcea* Mann. The names are not, however, mere spelling variants; *aurichalcea* 'of gold-bronze', *oricalcia* (a corrupt spelling) 'of mountain bronze', i.e. brass — actually suitable, by the way, only to the var. *hobsoni* Steph. — A. A. ALLEN, 49 Montcalm Road, London SE7.

EPIPHYAS POSTVITTANA (WALK.) (LEP.: TORTRICIDAE) IN MARCH. Col. G. G. Eastwick-Field brought a moth into the museum for identification which proved to be a female *E. postvittana*. It had been found alive inside a shop in Canford Cliffs, Poole, Dorset on 17th March, 1987 and had been put in a jar for Col. Eastwick-Field who finally saw the specimen on 23rd March. By this time it had died. Bradley & Tremewan (*British Tortricoid moths* 1) give: bivoltine, May to October, the two generations overlapping. We have taken this moth inland as late as early November so presumably it also occurs in that month in warm coastal areas such as Canford Cliffs. As to subsequent larvae, are there any records for the early months of the year thereby making Col. Eastwick-Field's record not so unusual?. B. R. BAKER, Reading Museum.

## Current Literature

**The insects of Thorne Moors** by P. Skidmore, M. Limbert and B. C. Eversham. The Sorby Record No. 23 (supplement) 1985 (published 1987). 64 pp. Limp. Published by the Sorby Natural History Society, price £2.00 (Available from M. Limbert, 23 Brockenhurst Road, Hatfield, Doncaster).